249
263 Chinese and Laotian middlemen and even the few European merchants--
438 have found that it brings in rewarding profits. Indeed, by exporting this product the latter are assured of an almost certain gain of 20 to 30 percent.

248 [387] Ramie. There is also much to be gained from increasing
434 the production of ramie or Chinese nettle. It is assured of an outlet in Cambodia, where it sells for as much as 80 francs per hundred kilograms.

219 Cinnamon. The extension of the plantations and gardens of
185 cinnamon trees already in existence in the province of Vien-Tiane deserves serious encouragement. The bark of these trees is a valuable product which is much sought-after in China and in Europe.

276 Opium poppies. The Government of Indo-China, which is
656 both the preparer and seller of chandoo or opium for smoking, is the party which would gain most from obtaining the raw drug on French territory. It is, indeed, still dependent on British India for this product, and can acquire it only on extremely disadvantageous terms.

Since much time must still pass, however, before the Meos and the Yaos give up their age-old methods, it would be essential for the intensive cultivation of the opium poppy to be undertaken by Europeans on behalf of the administration. This would be possible if there were a guaranteed labor supply in the form of Chinese coolies, who would be enlisted primarily for the greater part of the work, and of native specialists who would deal only with scarification of the capsules, harvesting the opium and the first stage of its preparation.

These delicate operations are the ones which the Meos and the Yaos like best, but they dislike plowing, fertilizing, weeding and irrigation, all of which tasks are indispensable for obtaining a high yield of capsules and consequently of the raw drug. It would therefore be best to entrust this heavy work to foreign coolies, and it is probable that after a certain time they too would be capable of extracting the opium. Impelled by their example, the natives would doubtless then be seen to break with their prejudices and devote themselves also to intensive cultivation so as to reap its full benefits.

The role of the administration would then be at an end, and it would gradually diminish its intervention as free cultivation of the poppies increased.

[435 Raw opium which is produced locally or which comes from [388] neighboring countries is worth 22 francs, 50 centimes to 32 francs, 25 centimes per kilogram, depending on quality, in northern Laos.

314 lose forever the plant which they have mutilated. The Superior
Resident in Laos has had studies made of the methods of extraction
314 which can be employed without danger, and he proposes to make
them obligatory within a short time. As of the present time, he
656 has issued the following decree relative to the exploitation of rubber:

"Any native desiring to engage in harvesting rubber on Laotian territory must obtain a special authorization which will be conferred by the chau-muong if the interested party resides in the muong where he desires to operate, and in all other cases by the Government Commissioner of the province.

[65] [110] "This authorization shall indicate, in as clear a manner as possible, the limits within which exploitation is to take place, the methods of extraction which may be employed and those which are prohibited, and finally the point where the rubber must be submitted for checking and payment of the duties which represent land tax before it leaves Laos.

"Businessmen and corporations desirous of sending their paid agents into the regions of rubber production may address to the Government Commissioner a collective request, in which the names and residences of such agents shall be listed and in which they shall agree to abide by all regulations which the authorities shall deem it useful to prescribe. In return they shall be sent permits drawn up in accordance with the provisions of the preceding article, these permits to be delivered to their employees.

"The above authorizations shall be granted entirely free of charge.

"Contraventions to the present decree shall be prosecuted and punished by the provincial tribunals in accordance with the laws and customs in force in Laos." (Decree of September 21, 1900.)

[141]

APPENDIX XXIII
NOTE ON TOBACCO

249 **Growth and preparation.** Tobacco is best grown on the banks of watercourses which are left dry each year when the waters fall and which are fertilized by deposits of alluvia.

Tobacco is also grown, however, on the banks in old alluvia which are no longer inundated by the river, but where an ample supply of water is assured by the presence of a nearby stream.

134 In Laos the soil which is suited to tobacco is light and sandy and
249 contains a high proportion of potash, relatively little lime and an average quantity of nitrogenous vegetable matter.

567 clothed--very simply, to be sure, like the rest of the family--but he is free to work for himself and can free himself quite easily if he is not too lazy. He is not mistreated by his masters and has scarcely any real work to do except during the rainy season at plowing time. As soon as the grain is in the slave for debt, who up to that time has lived in the house in the fields watching over the crop, goes back to town with the family to the houses surrounding those of his master, and if the harvest is a good one he has a good life without anything to do, taking part in all the festivities which go on in the house.

One unusual feature of these customs is that the master seems more to be pitied than the slave. Whereas the latter is free to change masters at will (in order to do so he has only to find a new one who will lend him the sum of money he owes), the latter cannot sell his interest in the slave to anyone else without the slave's consent. Thus if a master has the good fortune to find a good servant he has to treat him with a great deal of consideration, for there are plenty of people around him who would like to find a good one too. (Extract from a report by the Superior Commandant in Lower Laos.)

REGULATIONS GOVERNING SLAVERY FOR DEBT
(March 29, 1896)

567 ARTICLE 1. Any man or woman who borrows a sum of money
• G56 may, if not under fifteen or over fifty years old, engage his or her person in order to acquit the contracted debt.

[159] Such an engagement, which is an absolutely personal one, shall not be contracted for a sum greater than eighty ticals (one cattle).

ART. 2. A sum of six ticals for men and four ticals for women shall be deducted from the debt each year towards payment in full.

ART. 3. Any non-indentured wife living with her husband while the latter is a slave shall be fed and supported under the same conditions as her husband, and each year the latter's debt shall be decreased by a sum of four ticals representing the voluntary labor of the wife.

ART. 4. Children of slaves shall be free of all debts contracted by their parents.

Until they reach the age of fifteen they shall be bound to serve their parents' master in payment for food and effects given them. After the age of fifteen they shall be entirely free. If they agree to remain with their parents and serve their parents' master, their consent

567 must be specified in a special contract signed by them. In this case
656 their work will go toward payment of their parents' debt at the rate of six ticals per year for boys and four ticals for girls.

ART. 5. If a slave dies his debt is considered paid and is not transferable to any of his relatives.

[651] ART. 6. A master is held responsible for payment of the head tax on any dutiable slave.

If the latter cannot secure the necessary sum through his own labor the master shall pay, but any such sum shall be added to the principal debt and mention thereof shall be made on the contract of debt by the authorities responsible for collecting the head tax.

426 ART. 7. Any individual who borrows money shall present him-
567 self with the lender to the highest native authority in his territory,
656 who alone is empowered to certify debtor's notes.

The native authorities shall retain a duplicate of such debtor's notes; such notes shall be signed by both lender and borrower and invested with the seals of the authorities.

Notes shall be drawn up in ink and any crossings-out or additions approved.

ART. 8. For sums less than twenty ticals, the high authorities of a Muong may delegate their powers to the Tassengs or Phobans.

ART. 9. The provisions of this decree shall take effect immediately. Sons and grandsons of slaves for debt who have reached or passed the age of fifteen shall be regarded as free upon promulgation of these provisions. The same shall be true of persons under contract against their will, who shall have the right to have the contract which binds them revised in the presence of the French authorities.